

Pest Update (September 5, 2012)

Vol. 10, no. 25

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Note: samples containing living tissue may only be accepted from South Dakota. Please do not send samples of dying plants or insects from other states. If you live outside of South Dakota and have a question, instead please send a digital picture of the pest or problem. **Walnut samples may not be sent in from any location – please provide a picture!**

Available on the net at:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/Educational-Information/PestAlert-Archives.aspx>

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any product identified in this publication.

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Current concerns



Locust borer are beginning to appear. The locust borer (*Megacyllene robiniae*) is a common insect associated with declining black locust trees. Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) is best known for its attractive and fragrant white flowers that hang in long chains from the tree in early summer. The tree should not be confused with the honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) a tree that does not serve as a host for this insect. The adult, seen in the picture, is very colorful and distinctive with a large yellow 'W' on the wing covers and yellow bands on the thorax of any otherwise black insect. The adults fly in late summer and can be found searching for egg-laying sites on the locust or feeding on flowers. The leg-less larva, found from late autumn to the following mid-summer, is about one inch long at maturity and is typically cream colored with a brown head. The best means of control, other than maintain the health of the tree by watering, is to apply a bark spray of a permethrin product labels for borer now before the real flight begins.

The insect is most common in the 'Purple Robe' locust, a cultivar of black locust that has very attractive purplish flowers (and few seeds). Unfortunately this same cultivar is very susceptible to the borer and most trees I have seen are killed before they are 10 years old

Mountain pine beetle update.



Due to the dry summer weather, pines becoming infested with mountain pine beetle are producing very little pitch. I have seen heavily attacked trees that have only a few small brown pitch tubes and lots of small holes when the beetles entered without having to fight the pitch. The only way to identify that the tree is attacked is by the reddish-brown boring dust in the bark crevices and surrounding the base of the tree. This dust is created as the beetles bore through the bark and into the tree. Identifying infested trees will be a much harder task this year.

E-samples



I received a picture of this pine tortoise scale (*Toumeyella parvicornus*) from Volga. This is one of the two most common scales on mugo pines, the other being the pine needle scale. The pine tortoise scale differs from the pine needle scale in being a soft, rather than an armored, scale. Soft scales are honeydew producers so the twigs and needle on infested pines are often covered with a sticky

material and this is also usually coated in a black sooty mold. Since it is a soft scale the control is simpler than an armored scale. One of the easiest methods of control is a soil drench of imidacloprid (Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control) in the fall to kill the crawlers next spring or apply horticultural oil next spring, about when mockorange is blooming, to kill the crawlers when they are active. Malathion can also be used at that time but may also kill the many insects that feed on the scales.



This is the time of year where we start to see a lot of herbicide samples, including this one from Sturgis. This is a good example of a possible dicamba or 2,4-D drift on oaks. Late summer application of these common herbicides can result in leaf cupping, curling or abnormally lengthened leaves. The oak in this picture has a “stretched” leaf with very little lobing, a common occurrence with exposure to either of the above chemicals

Samples received

Codington County

A homeowners wants to know if these brown needles on their blue spruce and Black Hills spruce are from drought or disease.

Certainly the heat has been an issue though less so in your area than most of the state. This is probably the problem with the Black Hills spruce and these should recover but the blue spruce also had some spruce needleminers in the sample. See the sample from Turner County for more information.

Jones County
Ft. Pierre.

Please identify this tree from

This is the Russian mulberry (*Morus alba*), a tree brought to South Dakota in the late 1800s from Europe. The plant has raspberry-like purplish-black fruit that is readily eaten by birds (and some people like them as well), but usually there is a mess of fallen fruit beneath a tree. Mulberry has separate sexes so there are male mulberries and female mulberries. Since mulberry has three different leaf shapes it is probably one of my most identification samples in early fall.

Moody County
pine branches?

What is causing these pitch masses on the tips of the

This is the work of the pine pitch nodule moth. This insect feeds on the terminals of pines resulting in twig dieback. You can also find the sticky pitch masses and even the tunnel the larvae made as it feed in the tip. The larva is a reddish-yellow caterpillar with a black head and these can be found in the pitch

during the fall. An insecticide applied as the new candle begins to expand in the spring will provide some control of this insect.

Turner County

We have about 25 Colorado blue spruce about 5 to 6 feet tall and several have been dying. I am sending a sample from one that appears to be infested with something. We are watering but what else is going on?

This is about the heaviest spruce needleminer infestation I have ever received in a sample! The spruce needleminer spends the summer living and feeding and then burrows out of the needle and ties a bundle together with fine webbing and continues feeding from in there. The best control at this time of year is a high-pressure stream of water to knock them from the trees and then remove and burn the fallen larvae (and needles). The trees can also be treated in the spring with an insecticide to kill the larvae as they begin to resume feeding.